

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A feeder/separator apparatus for separating and moving sheets from a stack of sheets is described. The feeder/separator includes an input area for positioning the stack of sheets; a first and second series of rollers for jointly feeding a sheet on the bottom of the stack into an area of the apparatus including a third and fourth series of rollers and a first series of belts; a pre-separation brake adapted to act in a pivoting pattern only on the first series of belts to cause a first stage separation of the bottom sheet; a separation brake adapted to act in a linear pattern only on the fourth series of rollers to cause a second stage separation of the bottom sheet, the pre-separation and separation brakes permitting the bottom sheets to be separated from the stack; and a fifth series of rollers and a second series of belts both being adapted to feed the bottom sheets away from the feeder/separator apparatus in a sheet feed path.

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